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Benefit to fund aspiring teacher scholarships

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The Green River Regional Educational Cooperative on Sept. 19 will host its second annual fundraiser event for a scholarship serving students who aspire to become educators.

The Aspiring Educator Scholarship Program is for seniors who attend a public high school in the GRREC region and plan to major in education at Western Kentucky University.

Tickets are \$60 or \$200 for a table of four, and all proceeds fund the previous and upcoming scholarship winners, according to GRREC. Last year, the Daily News reported that the event had more than 180 guests and fundraised about \$4,500 – with scholarships providing \$2,000 annually per student across four years of college; this year’s award is the same, according to the scholarship rules.

Serving two new students annually, the benefit is intended to address a worsening teacher shortage statewide.

In the 2023 school year, nearly 11% of teachers did not

return to teaching, almost 17% didn't return to teach in their school districts and 20% of teachers didn't return to the same school to teach, according to the Legislative Research Commission of the Office of Education Accountability.

These, stated the commission, were the highest figures in 10 years.

“At the regional level, we want to help remove financial barriers any way that we can to get more educators certified to go into classrooms,” said Savannah Denning, creative media specialist at GRREC. “That’s where the whole idea came from.”

Members of the public may register for the event, which will have networking opportunities with superintendents and educators, among others, Denning said. There will also be a multi-course meal, testimonials from the scholarship winners and a keynote that features former UK basketball coach Tubby Smith – a mentor of GRREC CEO Bart Flener, the former superintendent at Russellville Independent Schools, Denning said.

“Sometimes in education, it is someone unconventional that can be a person for a kiddo that changes sort of their trajectory, who has that impact – lots of times, it’s teachers, but also, it’s coaches or music directors,” Denning said.

– The event takes place at 6 p.m. at the GRREC Event Center, 230 Technology Way, Bowling Green, KY. Visit bit.ly/BMBF24 for more information.

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